

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace paragraphs [001] and [0041] with the following paragraphs:

[001] Related U. S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/035,747, filed on even date herewith in the name of Guy L. Steele Jr. and entitled "Floating Point System That Represents Status Flag Information Within A Floating Point Operand," assigned to the assignee of the present application, is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0041] U. S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/035,747, filed on even date herewith in the name of Guy L. Steele Jr. and entitled "Floating Point System That Represents Status Flag Information Within A Floating Point Operand," describes a floating point unit in which floating point status information is encoded in the representations of the results generated thereby. By encoding the floating point status information relating to a floating point operation in the result that is generated for the operation, the implicit serialization required by maintaining the floating point status information separate and apart therefrom can be obviated. In one embodiment, the floating point unit includes a plurality of functional units, including an adder unit, a multiplier unit, a divider unit, a square root unit, a maximum/minimum unit, a comparator unit and a tester unit, all of which operate under control of functional unit control signals provided by a control unit. The instant application is directed to a maximum/minimum unit that can be used in the floating point unit described in that application and that has

the advantage of avoiding the problems exhibited by existing functional units that make use of the "obvious" maximum/minimum definition in the C programming language described above.